

Guidelines for Assignment Preparation & Submission

From Professor Mark Meisner

Assignments are a challenge at the best of times. One thing you shouldn't be doing is trying to dress them up unnecessarily. Your time should be spent focusing on the content and the writing. All of your work will be judged on both content and writing. In other words, grammar, spelling and other "writing" issues count. Therefore, I have prepared the following guidelines for preparation and submission of assignments.

By requiring specific approaches to formatting I hope to take the ambiguity and guess work out of it for all of us. Also, standardized formatting allows me (or my TA if there is one for this course) to evaluate your work strictly on the quality of the content and writing.

I also want to minimize waste in the assignment system while maintaining functionality. The format described below minimizes paper use for paper submission and facilitates electronic submission. For assignments submitted electronically, this format keeps file sizes to a minimum and makes it as easy as possible for me to open your files without worrying about lost content (e.g. footnotes) or formatting in the translation. Also, text-only files eliminate the risk of virus transmission which, by the way, is guaranteed to make the professor look at you suspiciously.

So, unless otherwise instructed, you should prepare and submit all written assignments using the following guidelines:

preparation

- Assignments should be prepared on a computer in text-only (also known as plain text) format. In MacOS, this can be done using TextEdit, TextWrangler, BBEdit or other similar text editors. In Windows, this can be done using NotePad. If you write in Word, then just "Save As" using "Text Only" (without line breaks) format before submission. Most other word processors will also allow saving as "Text Only" or something like that.
- Do not use **bold**, underline, italics, or other rich text styles.
- Use a 12 point Times font.
- Begin each assignment with the following information, each on a separate line with no spaces between the lines:
 - Title of your assignment (e.g., Review of Film "Planet of the Apes")
 - Your Name
 - Course Number and Name
 - Submitted to Professor Mark Meisner
 - Date Submitted
 - Followed by two blank lines
- The body of the text should then be single-spaced with one blank line between paragraphs.
- All text should be left justified.
- For section headings, use ALL CAPITALS and leave two blank lines before and one after the heading.
- For quotation marks use plain quotes only. Do not use "smart" quotes or "curly" quotes (see the documentation for your word processing software if you don't know what this means).
- Do not insert tabs or extra spaces at the start of a new paragraph; just leave an extra blank line between paragraphs.
- Avoid tabs altogether.
- Use only 1 space after a period before the next sentence, not two spaces.
- For underlining or emphasis, put a _ at the start and end of the underlined passage. For example, the title of a book such as Rachel Carson's Silent Spring should be "underlined" in this way.
- For block quotations, put them in a separate paragraph as usual and bracket them with [and] .
- Use the APA system and format for in-text citations. If you don't know the APA system, please visit the library and look it up.
- Be sure to include page numbers in your citations when appropriate.

- Where appropriate, the final section of the assignment should be called REFERENCES and should contain your reference list in APA format.
- Citations and reference lists must be complete and accurate!
- For explanatory endnotes (use only endnotes, not footnotes), simply put the number in the text with an asterisk * just before the number (like this: *2) and provide the numbered notes at the end of the body of the assignment (and before the REFERENCES section) under the section heading NOTES.
- See an example of a properly formatted assignment at <http://www.esf.edu/es/meisner/example.htm>

submission

- You should keep copies of all work you submit.
- You should also keep all notes and rough drafts in case you are required to document your work.
- I will ask for assignments to be submitted on paper, electronically, or both. Read the assignment sheet for instructions.

For electronic submissions

- Send assignments to me as attachments to an email message.
- assignments should be named in the following format: yourlastname.txt (e.g., meisner.txt)
- Submit "text-only" files (see above; your word processor should allow you to save in this format).
- Make sure that hard returns have NOT been inserted at the end of each line.
- **Do not submit Word, WordPerfect, RTF, etc. documents. I will reject these.**
- If you need to submit any graphics with your assignments, they should be separate files, size-optimised, set to 72dpi and in JPEG format.
- I will reply by email when I receive your assignment.

For paper submission

- Use 8.5x11 inch paper.
- Feel free to use both sides or to use recycled or reused paper, as long as the assignment side of the paper is clear and unobstructed.
- Use a staple to attach the sheets. Do not include a cover page or cover etc.
- Make sure pages are numbered!

questions?

If you have any questions about any of these guidelines, please contact me. Thank you for your cooperation.